

24

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A LETTER Concerning Trade,

From several Scots-Gentlemen that are Merchants in England,

To their Country-Men that are Merchants in Scotland.

Gentlemen, this Affair of the Union, has been the Subject of many of our Thoughts: And the Prosperity of our native Country is what we earnestly wish for, and if we are not extreamly deceived, the Union is the most desirable thing that ever was offer'd to Scotland.

We have just now read one Printed Paper, Entituled, *Some Considerations in relation to Trade, humbly offer'd &c.* And also another to the same purpose, Entituled, *A short View of our present Trade and Taxes.* We shall beg leave to give you our Thoughts on the Matters that are advanced in both these Pamphlets.

The Substance of both, we take to be contain'd in the *Eleven Proposals* that were made to the Lord high
A Com-

Edinburgh c 1706

Commissioner and the Parliament, in the latter end of the first of these Papers.

The first Thing that is desired, is, To be entirely freed of Taxes upon Salt, or if that cannot be obtain'd, That the Draw-back upon each Barrel, shall be considerably above the Tax upon Salt.

We are of Opinion, That to free you of all Duty upon Salt, and of all Draw-back upon Herrings and other salted Fish, were to do a prejudice to *Scotland*, for the Draw-back is now considerably greater than the Duty; for Example, a Bushel of foreign Salt which weighs 85 *lib.* will Salt a Barrel of Herrings, and the Duty of this is but 6 *sh.* 8 *d.* and the Draw-back upon a Barrel of Herrings is 8 *sh.* 4 *d.* A Bushel of foreign Salt will Salt half a hundred of common Cod-Fish, being each 24 Inches long, and the Draw-back upon them is, 1 *l.* 5 *sh.* therefore supposing that that there is no Fraud, but that all your Fish for which you have a Draw-back, is really Salted with foreign Salt, and *bona fide* Exported (which could never be brought to pass in *England*) yet still you will be great Gainers on your Draw-back. There is not much in what you say of laying out your Money for the Duty of Salt, for it is usual to give Bond payable in 6 Months, and if the Money be paid down, there is an allowance of 5 *per Cent* for prompt payment: We are of Opinion with you, That the Hoghead of Pilchards, which they say, requires 4 Barrels of Salt, should either have but 32 *sh.* Draw-back, or else that the Barrel of Herrings be put on an equal foot with Pilchards, and have 10 *sh.* Draw-back. We are of Opinion, That your request to have no Duty at all upon Salt, would be immediately granted, but then *England* would certainly grant



grant a Draw-back on their Beef and Pork that's Exported, and then where would be your Advantage: We suppose the reason why that was not done upon the Treaty, was because the Salt-Duties in *England* are appropriated for a certain number of Years to the payment of a Debt.

The second Thing that's Proposed, That you have the same Conditions with relation to Beef and Pork.

We think you have now the same, or very nigh the same Conditions as to Beef and Pork that the *English* have; for as you have no Draw-back, the *English* have no Draw-back: But you say, they Salt with domestick Salt which pays but 3 *sh.* 4 *d.* and you Salt with foreign Salt which pays 6 *sh.* 8 *d.* per Bushel? To this it's answered, That the Bushel of foreign Salt is much bigger and so much stronger than the domestick Salt, which is settled at 57 *l.* weight the Bushel, that half a Bushel of the one will go as far as a whole Bushel of the other; if the Fact is not so it ought to be rectify'd and made equal: But if you that have Beef and Pork, and Feeding, and Labour, and Freight, cheaper than the *English*, have your Salting as cheap, you ought not to desire, nor cannot expect it cheaper.

The third Thing that's desired is a reasonable Bounty-Money on the Exportation of your Oats, Oat-Meal and Pease; we think it is but just that it should be so.

The fourth Thing that you desire, is, Liberty to export Pladding, Fingrim, Sarge, Gallaway-Whites and Stockings, as regulated by your own Acts of Parliament; we are of opinion that you have this already in as ample manner as you can desire.

The fifth Thing is, That your Linnen should be allowed

lowed to be Exported to all Parts without laying any higher Duty than the present: We think you have this Privilege already, the Duty is not, nor never was but 6 pence on 40 Yards.

The sixth Thing you desire, is, That the Duties on your other Goods shall be Regulated according to your own Book of Rates; this is a general Head, and we don't well comprehend it: But if you mean, that pursuant to the Treaty, there should be some Regulations in the Book of Rates after the Union, (we think as you do) that the very concluding of the Treaty will make it very fit and necessary: But if you intend that there shall be one Book of Rates for *England*, and another for *Scotland*, and that there shall be lower Customs paid in *Scotland* than in *England*, after the Union, that can never be granted; nor is it consistent in one and the same Kingdom of *Great-Britain*: For from *Scotland* you may certainly after the Union, Trade as cheap as from *England*, Food, Labour and Freight, being rather cheaper than in *England*; and you cannot be said after the Union, to be setting up a new Trade, for you are actually coming into a Trade already settled at the Expence of the *English*, and to desire that your Customs should be less than the *English* Customs, is unreasonable: For instance, *Virginia* is already Settled, thither you may go with a Ship of 200 Tuns, Loaded with the Product and Manufactures of *Scotland*, and bring thence 500 Hogsheds of Tobacco, each Hogshhead weighing 500 *lib.* and let us suppose that you are eased in the Duty of this Tobacco in *Scotland*, but one 8th or 9th part, you will in this one Ship, have the advantage of 4 or 500 *l.* and more you would have at the Exporting of it if you get the

the same Draw-back : By which it's evident, that if the least abatement in the Customs were granted you, no body in *Britain* would Trade to *Virginia*, or buy Tobacco but from *Scotland*.

The seventh Thing that's mentioned seems to be of the same nature with the Sixth, so the same answer may serve ; for if you are in the same Condition with *England*, with respect to the Customs of the *Dutch*, *German* and *East-Land* Trades, &c. you cannot reasonably desire more : For supposing that in any one of the Commodities that comes from thence, for example, in fine *Holland* and *Coffee*, or any thing else, there were an abatement to *Scotland*, of an 8th or 9th part made of Duty, the same inequality would be in that, that there is in the Tobacco: Nothing that's unjust or unequal on either side is permanent.

The eight Thing proposed, is, That the Ships that belong to *Scotland* at the time of Confirming the Treaty, shall be made Free; we wish that this may be granted, and hope you will have satisfaction in that Point, but we fear the Demand will be look'd upon as a Project of some Persons here in *England* to make their foreign Bottoms free, and when 'tis granted it will tend more to the Advantage of them and other particular Persons, than to the general Good of *Scotland*. And as to the Matter of not having *Scots* Seamen Prest for seven Years, and then that a certain Number of them only should be Prest. We think this a very strange Proposal after an Incorporating Union, when there will be no difference betwixt *Scots* and *English* Seamen.

The ninth Thing is, That all Endeavours should be used to free you from the Excise upon Ale, Beer and Malt.

Malt. To this we answer, that in reckoning your Equivalent, your Excise upon Beer and Ale was reckoned at 33500 *l. per annum*, and if you keep it up to that Sum, we do not think there will be any more required of you, only as you encrease in your Consumption, you must encrease in your Excise proportionably : We know it to be matter of Fact, that the Rate that any Barrel of strong Beer containing 34 *English Gallons* (and paying the high Duty of 4 *sh. 6 d. per Barrel*) is from 16 *sh.* to 3 *l.* and upwards, and the same is rated for, from 4 *d.* to 1 *sh. 8 d.* the *Scots Pint*, and under the lowest of the above Rates none is bought, or sold for strong Beer: We know likewise, that some small Beer that pays the low Duty, is sold by the Brewer for 9 or 10 *sh. per Barrel*, and is retail'd for 2 *d.* the *Scots Pint*, and is better than your 2 *d.* Ale : We know likewise, that, that it's both lawful and usual to mix very strong Wort with small Wort, and thereby make several sorts of Drink that pay little more than the low Duty, so you may be very easy in this particular.

The tenth Thing is, the allowing a Port for the free Importation of Wool from *Ireland* ; we know no reason why it should not be granted.

In the last Place, we doubt not but all Care will be taken to Secure to Us and our Posterity the Benefit of this Union ; and we think the greatest and best Security is, because it is for the great Benefit of both Nations, and no instance that we know of can be given wherein after the Union, it can be broken to the disadvantage of that part now called *Scotland*, and that at the same time, and by the means of the same Infringement, there will twice as much damage happen to that part of *Britain* now called *England*. We

We wish, the Gentlemen, who frame those Arguments against the Union with a great deal of Art, would lay aside private Interest and Party, and weigh things in the Ballance of Reason and Justice, and not put false Colours on them to impose upon ignorant People, or to promote other Ends and Designs, than what they publicly mention.

If half the Art were apply'd to recommend, that's used to discommend the Union, these ingenious Gentlemen would soon make Profelites of all their Country.

Upon this sudden occasion, we shall not pretend regularly to answer Objections against, or make Arguments for the Union, but we shall mention some Materials or Heads for Arguments and Answers, which by any Man that is not already preingaged, may with ease be effectually apply'd to that End.

To pretend to be Friends to the Union, and yet to raise all Objections right or wrong, to say all that you can against it, and nothing for it, to calculate all the Debt and none of the Credit, to make Demands that are unjust and unequal, and cannot be granted; this is under the colour of Friends to the Union, to be the worst of Enemies.

The Taxes of *England*, especially these on Trade and things of Necessity, used to be small and low; the Malt Taxes and many other Taxes were never known till this War, and this War is only a contest for Trade, and we hope it has almost reacht its good End, and in truth both Malt-Tax and Land-Tax are now expired, the K. of *France* suing for a Peace, which we hope 12 Months will bring about, and after Peace, by the Treaty of Union you will come to be entirely free of the Land-Tax or Cess,

Cess which you can never be, except there is an Union. Gentlemen you know all this as well as we; In your Considerations and Views, &c. you might have had some Consideration or View of these things.

You mightily aggravate the high Duties on Wine, Brandy, Raisons, Almonds, &c. Neither the Poor nor Rich in *Scotland* would be the worse, (but much the better) If these Trades were Discouraged, and instead of changing your Product for things, of Luxury (that are Consumed amongst you, and Perish in the Using) you would Barter it in *Africa* for Gold, or in *America* for Silver, or that which would bring in Silver, you would be much greater Gainers: It's true, you would Drink less Wine and Brandy, &c. but to the great Encouragement of Tillage, you would Drink more Ale, and Aquavitæ, (which if you would be Advised by us) we would have you be Contented with, till you double your Estates.

If you Trade as you ought to do, and use only things of necessity, and things for encouraging Manufactories and get Draw-Backs for your Tobacco, your Fish, your Corn, and your Sugar, &c. you will find yourselves in a much better Condition with relation to the Customs after the Union, than you are before it.

What do you mean by your Paying the Draw-Backs, or the Equivalent yourselves, we think the Queen Pays them out of the Revenue which is none of yours, and might as formerly, been given to Courtiers, or Apply'd to other uses.

What need you rake the *French* Gazett for Scandal, the *English* Merchants are really very Rich, they are not Bankrupts, there is great Trade and great Estates, and

a great dale of Money still here; It's the late Act of Parliament that causes several notices about one Bankrupt to be given, that fills the Gazett so with Bankrupts.

You would make People believe, that there were no Taxes in *Holland*, you know that tho' *Holland* has no Customs, yet, if we Unite, we shall be upon a better foot than they are, in most Trades.

Why are Companys so often Mentioned, there is no Company to hinder you after the Union, but the *East-India* Company, and if after the Union you were to to keep up your own *East-India* Company, it might indeed make you Consume *East-India* Goods Cheaper at home, but you could not expect them Cheaper than the *English* and *Dutch* can: So the Nation would be no Gainer by the *Scots* Company, for its a question, if *England* Gains by the *English* Company.

Let the Poor Man Pay for his Salt with his Fish, or let the Merchants whom the Queen Trust with the Duty, Trust him with the Salt 6 Moneths without Interest.

We are glade your heads are kept above Water, but if this Union be not Concluded, Restrictions and Prohibitions will be put faster upon your Export, than you can Put upon them upon your Import, and this we fear, will quite Sink you.

Why do you mention *Berwick*, or such Places as have no Ports, or happen to have no Trade, consider other Places very remote from *London*, some of which have more Trade, and more Ships than all *Scotland*: As for Instance, *Bristol*, *Newcastle*, *Tarmouth*, *Plymouth*, *Whitehaven*, *Beddiford*, *Barnstable*, and several other Places.

When you have as much freedom, and as many Advantages by Trade as the *English* have, you will be as able to Pay the Taxes and Customs as they are: You see we Thrive under them all and get Money, you will not have the Trade for fear of the Customs; you will not Catch Fish for fear you weet your Feet, what wise *Scotfman* would be affraid to change the Trade and Policy of *Scotland* for that of *England*, let us judge of them both, according to what they have Produced these Hundred Years past?

The Union will produce three times the Encouragement that there now is for your Manufacturies, for your Grafsing, for the Consumption, and Exportation of your Corn and Cattle, and for your Navigation, so will the Product of your Land be exceedingly Encreased.

Your Miserable Unhappy Poor, that are used more like Slaves than Christians, and are deluded to oppose their own happiness, will have twice as much Wages, twice as good Victuals, and have equal Justice, Liberty and Property with their Masters; And therefore, will not need to leave you, and wander Abroad as they are forced to do, or if they are disposed to Travel, they may come to *England*, where they then will have a Right to these Blessings, altho' now they have a Right to nothing: We do not wonder, that Great and Cunning Men who foresee all this, and are unwilling to lose their absolute Sovereignty over these poor Ignorant Creatures, to impose on their Ignorance, and delude them to that degree, that they Fight for Chains and Yokes for their own Necks.

Consider the great Expence the *English* have been at, in Mantaining and Settling Trade all over the World, in Armies,

Armies, Forts, Factories, all which are already Bought, Payed for and Fitted ; And you are let into them.

What wild and Unjust Calculations do Gentlemen make, who mention all the Taxes and Charges in the time of this Exoensive War, when *England* Pays above 6000000 *lib.* Annually : And yet they take no Notice of the great Expectations of future Profite, nor yet of the present Advantages that are Enjoy'd : Even this very *Newfound land* Trade, which is used as an Objection, must either turn to no account at all, or else to the Advantage of *Scotland* more than of *England*.

Then, Consider the *English* Trade to *Holland*, *Sweden*, *Denmark* and the *Baltick* Sea, which Trades as they are now by the more Northerly parts of *England* carried away from the more Southerly parts, so after the Union *Scotland* will get them and keep them, till Freight Labour and Food come to be as Dear in *Scotland* as in *England*, we might Instance many other Particulars, viz.

The Linnen Cloath to be Exported to England and the Plantations.

The Scots Coals to be Exported to England.

The Trade to Guinea, and the other parts of Africa.

The Income by Coarse Woollen and Wosteds.

The Income by the Fisheries.

The Income of Gloves, Stockings, and all sorts of thin Leather.

The Income of all manner of Coarse Manufacturies.

Gentlemen, from these and other such particulars, we could make far more just Calculations than you have made.

But since Calculations are in fashion, we will pass by all the above-mentioned particulars of very profitable Trades, and from which we could Calculate vast Advantages to *Scotland*, and for brevity make use of the single Example of the *Plantation* Trade, from which alone we can shew the real Advantage that *Scotland* will reap by the Union, will far surmount these Imaginary losses in your Calculations.

For Example, the *Virginia* Trade Employs Annually 300 Sail of Ships, the *Islands* above 500 Sail, the far greater part of the Commodities that these Ships Export, are such as the Product and Manufactory of *Scotland* can afford Cheaper than *England*, and what is Imported from thence is Tobacco, Sugar, Cotton, &c.

Now it can be imputed to nothing but Laziness or Stupidity, if you that have greater Encouragements have not a proportionable Share of that Trade, but suppose you had but one 8th Part, that is 100 Ships, viz. 50 to *Virginia*, &c. and 50 to the *Islands*, what a vast quantity of your Native Product and Manufactory will those Carry off! And I hope at least, 3 Fourths of what is Imported by these Ships will be Exported, and the Duty Drawn Back, so we will suppose only 2000 Hogsheads is Exported and Sold at 5 *sh* per Pound, and say each Hogshead Containing 4 or 500 *lib.* and make 10 *lib.* the Export of Tobacco at this modest and under-Reckoning Amounts to about 20000 *lib.* Then these 50 Ships from the *Islands*, they will be almost twice the Value, and for brevity's sake we'll say the Amount of the whole that's Exported makes but 400000 *lib. sterl. per Annum*, This we think you may really get every Year by the Tobacco and Sugar, which you bring into *Scotland*;

land; Whereas now, by your own Confessions and Calculations you cannot be supposed to lose less than 20000 *l.* Annually by what you Import of those Commodities.

And the Things that you carry abroad to the Plantations to produce this 400000 *l.* are of such Natures, that the making and carrying them out do's as much real good to the Nation, as the bringing in of what they produce do's.—Not to mention the great Wealth that *Scotsmen* who have already settled in the Plantations would bring to *Scotland* in returning thither their Persons, or their Money and Effects, how will this one Branch of Trade swallow up all your Objections, and over-balance all your pretended Losses?

It is not because there are no other Trades but the Plantation Trade that we insist upon none of the other above-named profitable Trades that the Union will bring you, it's rather because they are obvious, and you yourselves if you please, may demonstrate the Advantages of them as well as we, for from every one of them many 1000 Pounds annual Advantage may easily accrue to the Nation.

For instance, in one of the least considerable of them, *viz.* The Trade to *Guinea*, we think that after the Union, *Scotland* may in exchange for Lead, coarse Spirits of Malt, old Sheets, and the thinnest of Pladden and Linnens, reasonably get from *Guinea* yearly 50000 *l. sterl.* in Gold, besides the other advantages in Trading there, for Slaves, all Spice, and dying Woods, &c.

And as to your calculation of the annual Expence of your Country, we think that from what we have said, it were more just to make it as follows, than as the Author of the *Short View* has made it.

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The Imposition on Trade (when by means of the Union Draw-backs are allowed, and Trades that are prejudicial to the Nation discouraged or prohibited) will not, we believe amount to above

50000

The Excise upon Beer and Ale, will not be encreased till the Consumption is encreased, so we will call it

40000

The Excise upon Malt being new, and now not in force, and not like to be continued above a Year should not be charged

As to the Excise on Brandy, we think that for the encouragement of Tillage, Spirits should be used instead of it, and so the 16th part of what is now used would serve.

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Of the Land-Tax we say the same as of the Malt-Tax

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But admitting that one or two Years, the Malt-Tax and Land-Tax and other high Impositions should continue, this War cannot last much longer, consider what *England* is Fighting for, and what a vast deal it has cost *England*, and what vast advantage a Peace and Union will bring to you all.

Gentlemen, what we have written is from the best of our Beliefs and Judgment, and with hearty Affection to every *Scotsman* and to our native Country, we assure you we have no by Ends nor private Interests, further or other, than what are common to all of us; and no consideration on Earth would tempt us to betray or mislead you: We do from our Hearts believe, that this Union
will

will bring Honour, Peace, Strength and Riches, to you as Men, and Moderation, Piety, Charity and Love, amongst you as Christians; and as you receive, so you to *England* will give the same Blessings: Which that it may be so, is the hearty Prayers of your Friends, Country-Men and Acquaintances, this 23 Day of *November* 1706, met together on purpose to put these our Sentiments in Writing, to the end the same may be communicated to you with our best Wishes.

Farewel.